# PRELIMINARY REPORT ON DEAF EDUCATION

TO THE

HONOURABLE RAY MEIKLEJOHN

MINISTER OF EDUCATION

GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

MINISTER'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON

DEAF EDUCATION

DECEMBER 28, 1990

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Deaf Education Advisory Committee
c/o 2220 College Avenue
Regina, Saskatchewan
S4P 3V7

December 28, 1990

Honourable Ray Meiklejohn
Minister of Education
Legislative Building
Regina, Saskatchewan
S4S 0B3

Dear Mr. Meiklejohn:

On behalf of the Advisory Committee on Deaf Education, I am pleased to enclose our preliminary report. As requested, the report provides recommendations on alternatives in place of the R.J.D. Williams Provincial School for the Deaf; in a broader sense, however, the recommendations address the issue of educational service delivery for the deaf and hard of hearing throughout the province.

The committee looks forward to continuing its deliberations as it enters into its second year in 1991.

Sincerely yours

Ruth Warick

Ruth Warick
Chairperson
Deaf Education Advisory Committee

Enclosure

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Advisory Committee on Deaf Education was established by the Minister of Education to provide advice on deaf education in Saskatchewan and, specifically, it was asked to make recommendations on alternatives in place of the R.J.D. Williams Provincial School for the Deaf. In this preliminary report, the committee provides four major recommendations which address not only the R.J.D. Williams situation but speak to the issue of service delivery throughout the province for the benefit of all deaf and hard of hearing students.

Recommendations are as follows:

1) **The Provision of Congregrated Programs**

- That congregated programs be offered by at least one school board in the City of Saskatoon and that the two school boards in the City of Saskatoon be asked to prepare proposals for the consideration of current R.J.D. Williams parents and students.

- That foster home placements be provided, or, if the numbers are sufficient, that group homes be provided for those students at R.J.D. Williams School for the Deaf now receiving such services.

2) **The Option of the Alberta School for the Deaf**

- That children who are currently enroled at the R.J.D. Williams Provincial School for the Deaf be provided the option of attending the Alberta School for the Deaf in Edmonton with government support provided through the sending school division.

  Furthermore, that this option be available for children who are not currently registered at the R.J.D. Williams Provincial School based on a needs assessment process.

3) **The Establishment of the R.J.D. Williams Resource Centre**

- That the Department of Education establish the R.J.D. Williams Resource Centre in Saskatoon as a co-ordinating body for educational service delivery and assign a staff person to develop a plan for the Centre to be fully operational by January 1, 1992.

4) **Funding and Other Issues**

- That priority be given to the redeployment of the present R.J.D. Williams staff and that during the transition period discussions and negotiations between the Department of Education and respective parties take place.

- That Saskatchewan Education revise its funding policy to more accurately reflect the costs associated with provision of appropriate support services to local school divisions.

- That the Department of Education explore ways of encouraging the employment of deaf personnel in the school system.

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*Source for the quotes in this report:
Jack Bromley, "Quality Education for All Deaf Children: An Achievable Goal" American Annals of the Deaf, 1987, Vol. 132, No. 5, pp. 340-343*

## I. Committee's Mandate

The Advisory Committee on Deaf Education is a standing committee which was established to advise the Minister of Education on the development and implementation of education programs which will meet the needs of deaf and hard of hearing children. Specifically, the Advisory Committee was asked to advise the Minister regarding the implementation of recommendations contained in the *Report of the Task Force on the Education of the Deaf* and on alternative approaches to the R.J.D. Williams Provincial School for the Deaf, slated for closure in June, 1991.

The committee was given a mandate which covers children from the early years to adulthood, including pre-school, elementary, secondary and post-secondary education programs and services for the deaf and hard of hearing population of the province.

In fulfilling its mandate the committee recognized that its role was not to duplicate reviews and public hearings undertaken in the province over the last several years. In particular, a Task Force on the Education of the Deaf was convened two years ago, resulting in public hearings and the completion of two reports. Rather than replicate this, the task of the committee was to review the reports and to make recommendations concerning them.

Since January, 1990, the committee has been meeting on a monthly basis. The committee itself consists of a cross-section of deaf and hard of hearing adults, professionals and parents from throughout the province. Altogether, there are eight deaf and hard of hearing persons on the committee, and a total of 21 committee members; as well there are four members on the committee's secretariat. Appendix B lists the names of the committee members.

## II. Report's Focus

> *The maintenance of quality compels continuous change and adaptation to new information.**

In light of the Minister's request for alternative approaches to the R.J.D. Williams Provincial School for the Deaf the committee has focused its energies on this task, recognizing the need to fulfill its mandate and to move forward with the best interests of deaf and hard of hearing children as its prime concern.

Given that the R.J.D. Williams Provincial School for the Deaf has undeniably been a historical service delivery institution in the province, an alternative mechanism is required to ensure that its programs and services are delivered. The committee also realized that its task involved not only a response to the R.J.D. Williams Provincial School for the Deaf situation but an opportunity to enhance deaf education in the province. It is recognized that the delivery system must consider all of the over 300 deaf and hard of hearing children in the province.

In making recommendations for alternatives in place of the R.J.D. Williams Provincial School for the Deaf, the committee recognizes that a range of programs and services already exist for deaf and hard of hearing children in the province along the integration/segregation continuum. Most of the deaf and hard of hearing children in the province are already in some type of congregated program or in a single placement situation with various types of supports being provided depending on the child's needs. The recommendations in this report speak to the issue of not only the R.J.D. Williams situation, but also to service delivery throughout the province. Thus, the potential to make a substantial impact for the benefit of all deaf and hard of hearing children is considerable.

Specifically, in exploring the issue of alternatives to the R.J.D. Williams Provincial School for the Deaf, the committee received presentations by representatives of the parents, staff and students at the R.J.D. Williams Provincial School for the Deaf. As well, the committee received a summary of the results of meetings held by special education co-ordinators with the parents of students currently enroled at the R.J.D. Williams Provincial School for the Deaf. The summary indicated family placement preferences in place of the residential facility.

In November, a draft summary report was prepared by the committee and was circulated by committee members to various groups and individuals. The chairperson and a committee member met with students, parents and staff of the R.J.D. Williams Provincial School for the Deaf, and with the Saskatoon deaf community, in open meetings to obtain feedback on the report. The feedback was taken into account in the preparation of this preliminary report which the advisory committee finalized at its December meeting.

## III. Principles

> *Quality happens where committed groups of knowledgeable people working together make individualized decisions based on objective evidence for each child's present and future.**

The goals of education of deaf and hard of hearing children are exactly the same as they are for hearing children. Where there are differences between the two populations is in the means of achieving these goals and in the emphasis given to different needs. These goals universally revolve around the total needs of the child for their intellectual, social, physical and emotional development. Thus, the written and unwritten curriculum must adequately address such developmental needs.

The educational system must encourage individual self-fulfilment so each child realizes his or her full potential. It must strive for excellence in standards and be available equitably regardless of the child's level of hearing loss or geographical location. And, while there are various stakeholders in the educational process, the ultimate responsibility for the child's education rests with the child's parents, though as a child matures, he or she shares in that responsibility.

The following summarizes the values which underline the committee's philosophy with respect to the education of deaf and hard of hearing children and youth:

- **Individual Self-Fulfilment.** Each child is an individual and should be encouraged to realize his or her full potential.

- **Parental Choice.** Based on the provision of information, the ultimate responsibility and right to choose an educational program for a child remains with his/her parents. As a child matures, he or she shares in that responsibility.

- **Equity of Educational Opportunity.** Programs and services should be provided for each student regardless of level of hearing loss or geographical location, recognizing that not all programs or services will be the same in all locations.

- **Recognition of the Total Needs of the Child.** The total needs of a child, including the needs for safety and well-being, must be recognized for an educational program to be effective.

- **Recognition of Deafness as a Unique Condition.** Deafness is unlike any other disability and must be recognized as such. As a result, the hearing impaired child should be equipped to take part in both a hearing society and the deaf world to the extent the child chooses to do so.

- **Excellence of Standards.** The quality of education should be such that deaf and hard of hearing students reach the standard achieved by their hearing counterparts to the best of their ability.

## IV. RECOMMENDATIONS RELATED TO ENHANCING DEAF EDUCATION

> *Quality elementary and secondary education for deaf children comes in many designs. No one program can meet all the needs of all deaf students. Consequently, options need to exist, each describing honestly what can be provided with quality.*

As a response to the closure of the R.J.D. Williams Provincial School for the Deaf, recommendations for 1) the provision of congregated programs, 2) the option of the Alberta School for the Deaf, and 3) the establishment of the R.J.D. Williams Resource Centre are outlined. These recommendations are in addition to the other options which exist for students along the continuum from a congregated program to a single-placement situation.

### Congregated Programs

Congregated programs provide for the grouping of children to address common curriculum and social needs and to provide supports within that setting as well as in the host environment.

Minimal requirements for a congregated program, as defined by the Advisory Committee, are:

- that, in a common environment, children of similar ages receive some deliberately programmed curriculum together, according to their needs;
- that there be the delivery of educational services to the group as an entity by qualified personnel;
- that a range of time be spent together academically in a common environment,
- that there be the provision for time together socially;
- that there be the provision of additional support, focused on the needs of the students (ie. note takers, counselling);
- that the program's administrative structure be an integral part of the host school.

The committee recognizes the importance of fostering a positive connection between a congregated program and its host school. The congregated program must be an integral part of the host environment so that students can benefit from its educational and social opportunities while also receiving the support and benefits which accrue from a congregated program.

There is also the acknowledgement that ideally a congregated program would meet other conditions and that the application of these same conditions would benefit all deaf and hard of hearing children regardless of their type of placement. These other conditions are as follows:

- instruction and support provided by qualified and trained personnel including deaf adults as role models;
- the opportunity to participate in deaf cultural events;
- access to audiological, counselling and health services;
- an environment which is sensitive to the needs of the deaf and hard of hearing and includes such technical supports as telecaptioned devices, fire alarm lights, adapted intercom systems and telephone devices for the deaf;

- the provision of recreation and leisure activities with interpreting services available for students to partake in these activities;

- the availability of living arrangements, as required by a child, in a foster/family home which considers the child's individual and communication needs;

- the provision of additional support in the way of educational services and materials as required.

The committee obtained feedback from the regional co-ordinators' interviews and meetings with parents and with representatives of the R.J.D. Williams Provincial School for the Deaf that a congregated program within one school division would be favoured. Parents varied in their preferences between the City of Saskatoon's two school boards: the Saskatoon Separate School Board which, since fall, 1990 has set up a program for several deaf students and the Saskatoon Board of Education which has had a number of programs for several years. Under present policies, parents have the right to choose to participate in one or the other school system as the City of Saskatoon has open school boundaries. From the Advisory Committee's point of view, in considering a change in the delivery structure, the issue becomes one of which school division can best set up a program to respond to the needs of children presently at the R.J.D. Williams Provincial School for the Deaf.

Regardless of the school system which delivers a congregated program, the committee notes that the low incidence nature of the population group means that programs and structures must accommodate fluctuations in numbers. In particular, it requires a responsiveness to the child as the needs may change depending on the individual. Given that hearing losses vary considerably with each child and that some children have an additional disability, the need for flexibility is fundamental for an effective service delivery system.

As a result of the closure of the R.J.D. Williams Provincial School for the Deaf, the committee recommends:

**Recommendation 1: That congregated programs be offered by at least one school board in the City of Saskatoon. The Committee also acknowledges that since parents already have the right to choose services from either school board division in Saskatoon, the same choice of either school board should remain with respect to a congregated program.**

Recommendation 1.1:

a) That the Department of Education engage in discussions with the two school boards in the City of Saskatoon to provide information about the current R.J.D. Williams program and students' requirements.

b) That the two school boards be asked to prepare proposals on their response to establishing a congregated program which would accommodate the R.J.D. Williams' students' needs and communication methodology as well as meet the conditions for the minimum requirements for congregated programs as outlined in this report.

c) That parents and students be invited to a meeting to discuss proposals for a congregated program and clearly state a decision on their preferences early in 1991.

Recommendation 1.2: That a program plan be drawn up for each student currently at the R.J.D. Williams Provincial School for the Deaf with the concurrence of the child's parents and involving the child when appropriate. Those children with special needs or disabilities beyond a hearing loss should also have these needs addressed in the program plan to the satisfaction of the involved parties.

Implementation: To implement Recommendations 1, 1.1 and 1.2, the committee recommends:

a) That the Department of Education, through the Principal of the R.J.D. Williams Provincial School and involving the Special Education Branch and the Psychoeducational Assessment Clinic (P.E.A.C.), continue to prepare exit program plans for students.

b) That communication channels be maintained with parents, students and staff of the R.J.D. Williams Provincial School and that Special Education Co-ordinators continue to play a role in this regard.

c) That the Department of Education Special Education Co-ordinator in Saskatoon be assigned a lead co-ordinating role to co-ordinate implementation plans over the next year (1991), working in conjunction with the School for the Deaf principal, P.E.A.C. staff and appropriate local school board personnel.

**Living Arrangements**

In support of the first set of recommendations, the committee discussed the provisions required for living arrangements and recognized its importance in that the out-of-school environment impacts on the quality of the child's education. The committee noted that as much as possible students should be provided with appropriate family environments which consider the individual needs and background of each student including age, communication skills and social needs.

The committee agreed that a foster home/family home may be preferable to a group home environment particularly given the few numbers of students with very diverse backgrounds who are seen to benefit from this arrangement. Ideally, any home would have appropriate environmental features such as flashing lights and closed captioned televisions. If desired, there should be access to medical staff who are fluent in sign language.

The committee recognized that at least four of the students currently at the R.J.D. Williams Provincial School for the Deaf have some type of living arrangements apart from their family covered by the Province and/or school division and another nine students, who are under federal jurisdiction, also have some type of living arrangements covered by the federal government. New arrangements need to maintain such past practises.

**Recommendation 1.3: That foster home placements or, if the numbers are sufficient, that group homes be provided for those students at the R.J.D. Williams Provincial School for the Deaf now receiving such services.**

**Recommendation 1.4: That foster parents and/or group home staff be skilled in communicating in the language of the child's choice or be required to acquire such skills; ideally, deaf parents would be chosen to be foster parents, given that the other criteria in place for foster parents is met.**

**Recommendation 1.5: That foster/group homes strive to have appropriate environmental features and access to medical staff who are fluent in sign language, if required.**

**Implementation: The department's assigned co-ordinator (as identified in Recommendation 1) should work with the Principal of R.J.D. Williams Provincial School for the Deaf in arranging for foster homes and/or group homes for students now in alternate living arrangements and should**

**facilitate the arrangements with parents and students at the R.J.D. Williams Provincial School for the Deaf.**

**Alberta School for the Deaf Option**

The committee acknowledged that as some students at the R.J.D. Williams Provincial School for the Deaf have been accustomed to a segregated facility for most of their schooling years, they may feel that their educational goals can only be achieved in such a setting. The feedback received from parents and students indicated that some may want this option available to them.

The feedback also indicated that the preferred choice of a segregated facility outside of Saskatchewan would be the Alberta School for the Deaf in Edmonton, for a number of reasons. On a geographical basis, the school is the closest one to the current site of any other provincial School for the Deaf in the country. It was also noted that while the distance may be considerable, it is not uncommon in other provinces for students to travel such distances for a residential school for the deaf and that the advent of air travel has reduced travel time considerably. In recognition of the need for travel, some provision for paying for travel would need to be provided for this option to be viable.

The committee was also aware that students are currently able to attend the R.J.D. Williams Provincial School for the Deaf until graduation or age 21 years. Given this, the support for the Alberta School for the Deaf would need to be on the same basis.

As well, it was felt that based on the results of an assessment process, this option may also be found to be the most beneficial and desired option in the future for other deaf students. An appeal process currently in place in the Department could be used when decisions need to be reviewed.

In making the following recommendation, the committee acknowledges that the preference would be for parents and students to choose to remain in the province in a congregated or other program. However, the committee also believes that the Alberta School for the Deaf option is needed to give parents and students another choice.

**Recommendation 2:** That children who are currently enroled at the R.J.D. Williams Provincial School for the Deaf be provided the option of attending the Alberta School for the Deaf in Edmonton with government support provided through the student's sending school division.

**Recommendation 2.1:** That the option identified in Recommendation 2 be available for children who are not currently registered at the R.J.D. Williams Provincial School based on the results of a needs assessment process, with an appeal process being available.

**Recommendation 2.2:** That a home visitation policy be developed for Saskatchewan students who may attend the Alberta School for the Deaf.

**Recommendation 2.3:** That, if there is any possibility of an interruption or discontinuation of social service benefits for Saskatchewan students who currently receive such benefits and who choose to attend the Alberta School for the Deaf, that the Department of Education take the necessary steps to prevent such an occurrence.

**Implementation:** The committee recommends:

a) That an official from the Alberta School for the Deaf be invited to Saskatoon to meet with students and parents early in 1991.

b) That a visitation by students and parents to the Alberta School for the Deaf early in 1991 be facilitated.

c) That a process be undertaken by the Department of Education:
   - to ensure that information about this option and the congregated program option is provided in the same forum,
   - to identify those who favour the Alberta School for the Deaf option,
   - to make the necessary arrangements for a transition for those who favour this option.

## Resource Centre

> *Collaboration between various options will ensure that no gaps need to exist. Sharing of our knowledge will ensure a continuously growing competency in providing a quality education to deaf children. People make a difference. People working together make a positive difference.**

The establishment of a Resource Centre is essential as a support base for meeting the educational goals of all deaf and hard of hearing children in the province. As envisioned by the committee, the Resource Centre would be a co-ordinating body for enhancing service delivery and would ensure that required services and programs are available for the child, the family, professionals, deaf and hard of hearing adults, as well as for schools and other institutions.

An effective Resource Centre must have a high degree of visibility in the community and maintain a high profile. It should provide strong leadership and play the role of an advocate for the needs and concerns of the deaf and hard of hearing child. It has a valuable role to play in disseminating and providing information, fostering training and being a source of support. In order to do all this, it must have effective leadership, well-respected staff and secure funding.

The Resource Centre can play a significant role in identifying and fostering the development or adaptation of curriculum as required. It should also foster and promote research and undertake to ensure programs and services are evaluated and that the results of such studies are shared.

Among the functions for the centre are:

- professional development
- parent in-service and support
- resources and information services
- school-based supports
- counselling services
- nurturance of deaf culture

- research, and
- advocacy.

The Resource Centre should link up with, or incorporate into it, the Psychoeducational Assessment Clinic (P.E.A.C.) which is now operated out of the R.J.D. Williams Provincial School for the Deaf. As well, it should assume the print and audio visual resources and services provided by the Resource Centre currently at the School for the Deaf.

While a separate unit under the Special Education Branch of the Department of Education, the Centre also needs to link up to a broader array of support services to maximize these for the benefit of the deaf and hard of hearing population. In particular, the Centre should involve such existing agencies as the Saskatchewan Hearing Aid Plan (SHAP). It must also work together with other organizations and agencies.

The Centre needs to work in partnership with deaf adults to provide a focal point for the nurturance of deaf culture. At the same time, the Centre must foster the involvement of parents, recognizing the vital role they play in the educational process of their child.

The Centre should be located in Saskatoon with the feasibility in subsequent years of establishing satellites in Regina and regional areas as the need arises. As a result of being a separate unit and operating out of several locations, the Centre will have the advantage of being in close proximity to the delivery of services.

**Recommendation 3: That a Resource Centre of educational resources for the deaf and hard of hearing with the vision and leadership to be on the cutting edge of deaf education be established. Furthermore, that the Centre be named the R.J.D. Williams Resource Centre.**

**Recommendation 3.1: That the Centre be operated by the Department of Education, Special Education Branch and be located in the City of Saskatoon.**

**Recommendation 3.2: That several models for a Resource Centre which expand on its relationship to P.E.A.C., be developed for the review of the Advisory Committee of Deaf Education by May 30, 1991.**

**Recommendation 3.3:** That the audio-visual and print currently located at the R.J.D. Williams Provincial School for the Deaf become part of the Resource Centre.

**Recommendation 3.4:** That the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation resource network and the Department of Education computer resource network be linked to the Resource Centre in order to disseminate resources province-wide.

**Recommendation 3.5:** That there be appropriate staffing up of the Centre and the following functions be considered for the Centre: professional development, parent in-service and support, resources and information services, school-based supports, counselling services, nurturance of deaf culture, research, advocacy, and outreach to provide adequate support services to deaf and hard of hearing students and their parents. The latter support services would focus on counselling, communication classes and support groups. This would also involve parents receiving information about all communication, language and program options in an equal and unbiased manner. (Note: Part of this recommendation is in concurrence with Recommendation 4.4 from the Task Force Report.)

**Recommendation 3.6:** That the Resource Centre facilitate social opportunities for children and students such as the Western Canadian Tournament of the Deaf, Arts Festivals, summer camps, family clinics and cultural events which provide social interaction with deaf and hard of hearing youngsters and adults. Community organizations and groups such as the Saskatchewan Deaf Association, the Saskatchewan A. G. Bell Association, Saskatchewan Deaf Sports Association and the Saskatchewan Cultural Society of the Deaf should be encouraged to assume/maintain a leadership role in making these opportunities available. (Note: Part of this recommendation is in concurrence with Recommendation 4.6 from the Task Force Report.)

**Implementation:** That the Department assign a staff person to develop an implementation plan for the Centre to be reviewed by the Advisory Committee in May, 1991. The plan should anticipate that the Centre would be initially established by September, 1991 and would be fully operational by January 1, 1992.

**Implications of the Above Recommendations**

The recommendations acknowledge the change of the delivery of programs and services for the deaf and hard of hearing in the province. This change requires a commitment by both those involved in deaf education as well as those in the regular school system. Essential for all programs will be the on-going provision of resources, support and monitoring. As well, there must be flexibility and responsiveness in order to meet new and emerging needs in a field that is constantly evolving and changing.

In particular, the above recommendations have the following impact on the R.J.D. Williams Provincial School for the Deaf:

- Relocation of students to a congregated program in an elementary school and a secondary school in Saskatoon offered by at least one school board, depending on preferences for this option.

- Retention of the name of "R.J.D. Williams" for the Resource Centre.

- Provision of many of the services associated with the School by the Resource Centre and within congregated programs.

- Need for funding provided to the R.J.D. Williams Provincial School to be retained and reallocated for the education of the deaf and hard of hearing population.

In the transition period, the committee recognizes that these changes involve some dislocation. The committee supports the Task Force report Recommendation #6 regarding the staff at the R.J.D. Williams Provincial School for the Deaf. In this regard, opportunities for employment in congregated programs as well as with the new R.J.D. Williams Resource Centre should be actively pursued. The committee also recognizes and respects that school boards exercise autonomy in their hiring but at the same time appreciates the need to draw upon and retain the expertise of existing staff.

**Recommendation 4: That priority be given to the redeployment of the present R.J.D. Williams staff and that during the transition period discussions and negotiations between the Department of Education and respective parties take place.**

## V. FUNDING

*Deaf education can improve at each level through collaborative efforts, sharing of information, experimenting with innovative interventions and pooling of resources.**

The committee recognizes that the province is in a time of fiscal restraint but feels that it is essential that there be a strong resource base for deaf education in Saskatchewan. The current level of funding provided in deaf education must be retained and moreover enhanced.

The funding policy needs to more accurately reflect the costs associated with the provision of appropriate support services. It is particularly important that the funds now currently provided to the R.J.D. Williams Provincial School for the Deaf not be disbursed under a more general special education umbrella, but instead be retained for deaf education. Funding for direct service delivery must receive priority so that individual children are the primary beneficiaries.

The following recommendations speak to the need to retain and relocate funds:

**Recommendation 5: That current funding levels for the education of deaf and hard of hearing children in the province be maintained and increased with a priority for reallocation being direct service delivery. As part of this, the funding currently provided to the R.J.D. Williams Provincial School for the Deaf should be retained and reallocated for deaf education.**

**Recommendation 5.1: That Saskatchewan Education revise its funding policy to more accurately reflect the costs associated with the provision of appropriate support services to local school divisions. Included as appropriate support services should be funding for interpreter services both for in-school and after-school hours activities. To accomplish this, the funding structure should be changed to top up the base grant with enhanced funding based on the program plans prepared for each child; this would build in an accountability process for funds received.**

## VI. OTHER ISSUES

The committee discussed several recommendations from the Report of the Task Force on the Education of the Deaf and agreed with Recommendation #3 of the report which stated:

> *"That the regulations of the Education Act be amended to require that school boards provide an appropriate educational program for deaf children from age three to school entry age to ensure that deaf preschool children are guaranteed access to educational programs".*

The committee felt that the wording in the regulations should be changed to **"shall"** from **"may"** so that school boards and officials cannot opt out of handling a parental request for a hearing impaired child, whether it be to provide for the program in the child's home district or to make alternate arrangements.

By way of background, Section 50(2) of the regulations under The Education Act is currently worded:

> *On the request of a parent or guardian of a child who is three years of age or older but less than school age, the Regional Co-ordinator of Special Education may identify that a child as a high-cost disabled pupil and place that pupil in a special education program.*

Also section 52(1) of the regulations states:

> A board of education shall:
> (a) make available at no cost to their parents or guardians, special education services for disabled pupils, that are, in the opinion of the minister, appropriate, including special schools, special classrooms, resource rooms and itinerant and tutorial programs, and **may** provide those services for pre-school age disabled children identified pursuant to subsection 50(2), in order that disabled pupils and children can benefit from the most appropriate and least restrictive program.

**Recommendation 6: That the regulations to the Education Act be amended to require that school boards provide, on request, an appropriate educational program for deaf children from age three to school entry age to ensure that deaf preschool children are guaranteed access to educational programs.**

The committee also discussed the need for more deaf personnel to be employed within the school system and other educational institutions and passed the following recommendation:

**Recommendation 7: That the Department of Education explore ways of encouraging the employment of deaf personnel in the school system.**

## VII. IMPLEMENTATION AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The committee recognizes that the recommendations identified in this preliminary report require implementation strategies. These are outlined as follows:

Implementation Strategies

- The committee recommends that the Department of Education engage in discussions with the two school boards in the City of Saskatoon to determine the location of congregated programs at the elementary level and at the secondary level in place of R.J.D. Williams Provincial School for the Deaf.

- The department should designate a co-ordinator for proceeding on the implementation of the above recommendations, working in conjunction with the school principal, P.E.A.C. staff and local school board staff. The role would also be to maintain communication channels with parents, students and staff of the R.J.D. Williams Provincial School and the respective personnel in the school boards.

- The co-ordinator, along with the principal of the R.J.D. Williams Provincial School for the Deaf, should look into establishing foster homes and facilitate arrangements with parents and students at the R.J.D. Williams Provincial School for the Deaf.

- The Department of Education should assign a staff person to develop an implementation plan for the Resource Centre to be reviewed by the Advisory Committee in May, 1991. The plan should anticipate that the Centre would be initially established by September, 1991 and would be fully operational by January 1, 1992.

- An official from the Alberta School for the Deaf should be invited to Saskatoon to meet with students and parents early in 1991 and a visitation by students and parents to the School early in 1991 should be facilitated.

- The Department of Education should develop a process to identify those who favour the Alberta School for the Deaf option; however, at the same time, information on the congregated program option should be made available. For those who favour the Alberta School for the Deaf option, the Department should make the necessary arrangements to facilitate a transfer.

- The Department of Education should begin discussions with the appropriate parties about the redeployment of the present R.J.D. Williams staff in the transition period.

In more general terms, the Department of Education is urged to develop an action plan to deal with all of the other recommendations and to commence with their immediate implementation so that the provision of educational programs and services can move forward.

While a targeted deadline of December 30, 1990 for this report has been essential given the number of implementation steps to take place, the committee will be providing further advice in the coming months. As part of this process, the committee invites continuing comment by stakeholder groups and individuals.

The list of recommendations and issues described in this report is not exhaustive but is a start toward enhancing deaf education in Saskatchewan, a task requiring commitment and co-operation.

In the next six months, the committee will be making specific recommendations in the areas of personnel, language and deaf culture, administrative structures, training, assessments and supports. Besides commenting on the K-12 system, the committee will be making recommendations on pre-school and post-secondary educational programs and services.

In making the recommendations in this report, the committee recognizes that change is not always easy, but also urges that energies be focused on how to proceed in light of changing realities so that programs and services will best serve the needs of the deaf and hard of hearing child.

## Appendix A

### Summary of the Recommendations

Congregated Programs

**Recommendation 1:** That congregated programs be offered by at least one school board in the City of Saskatoon. The Committee also acknowledges that since parents already have the right to choose services from either school division in Saskatoon, the same choice of either school board should remain with respect to a congregated program.

**Recommendation 1.1:**

a) That the Department of Education engage in discussions with the two school boards in the City of Saskatoon to provide information about the current R.J.D. Williams program and students' requirements.

b) That the two school boards be asked to prepare proposals on their response to establishing a congregated program which would accommodate the R.J.D. Williams' students' needs and communication methodology as well as meet the conditions for the minimum requirements for congregated programs as outlined in this report.

c) That parents and students be invited to a meeting to discuss proposals for a congregated program and clearly state a decision on their preferences early in 1991.

**Recommendation 1.2:** That a program plan be drawn up for each student currently at the R.J.D. Williams Provincial School for the Deaf with the concurrence of the child's parents and involving the child when appropriate. Those children with special needs or disabilities beyond a hearing loss should also have these needs addressed in the program plan to the satisfaction of the involved parties.

Living Arrangements

**Recommendation 1.3:** That foster home placements or, if the numbers are sufficient, that group homes be provided for those students at the R.J.D. Williams Provincial School for the Deaf now receiving such services.

**Recommendation 1.4:** That foster parents and/or group home staff be skilled in communicating in the language of the child's choice or be required to acquire such skills; ideally, deaf parents would be chosen to be foster parents, given that the other criteria in place for foster parents is met.

**Recommendation 1.5:** That foster/group homes strive to have appropriate environmental features and access to medical staff who are fluent in sign language, if required.

Alberta School for the Deaf Option

**Recommendation 2:** That children who are currently enroled at the R.J.D. Williams Provincial School for the Deaf be provided the option of attending the Alberta School for the Deaf in Edmonton with government support provided through the student's sending school division.

**Recommendation 2.1:** That the option identified in Recommendation 2 be available for children who are not currently registered at the R.J.D. Williams Provincial School based on the results of a needs assessment process, with an appeal process being available.

**Recommendation 2.2:** That a home visitation policy be developed for Saskatchewan students who may attend the Alberta School for the Deaf.

**Recommendation 2.3:** That, if there is any possibility of an interruption or discontinuation of social service benefits for Saskatchewan students who currently receive such benefits and who choose to attend the Alberta School for the Deaf, that the Department of Education take the necessary steps to prevent such an occurrence.

Resource Centre

**Recommendation 3:** That a Resource Centre of educational resources for the deaf and hard of hearing with the vision and leadership to be on the cutting edge of deaf education be established. Furthermore, that the Centre be named the R.J.D. Williams Resource Centre.

**Recommendation 3.1:** That the Centre be operated by the Department of Education, Special Education Branch and be located in the City of Saskatoon.

**Recommendation 3.2:** That several models for a Resource Centre which expand on its relationship to P.E.A.C., be developed for the review of the Advisory Committee of Deaf Education by May 30, 1991.

**Recommendation 3.3:** That the audio-visual and print currently located at the R.J.D. Williams Provincial School for the Deaf become part of the Resource Centre.

**Recommendation 3.4:** That the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation resource network and the Department of Education computer resource network be linked to the Resource Centre in order to disseminate resources province-wide.

**Recommendation 3.5:** That there be appropriate staffing up of the Centre and the following functions be considered for the Centre: professional development, parent in-service and support, resources and information services, school-based supports, counselling services, nurturance of deaf culture, research, advocacy, and outreach to provide adequate support services to deaf and hard of hearing students and their parents. The latter support services would focus on counselling, communication classes and support groups. This would also involve parents receiving information about all communication, language and program options in an equal and unbiased manner. (Note: Part of this recommendation is in concurrence with Recommendation 4.4 from the Task Force Report.)

**Recommendation 3.6:** That the Resource Centre facilitate social opportunities for children and students such as the Western Canadian Tournament of the Deaf, Arts Festivals, summer camps, family clinics and cultural events which provide social interaction with deaf and hard of hearing youngsters and adults. Community organizations and groups such as the Saskatchewan Deaf Association, the Saskatchewan A. G. Bell Association, Saskatchewan Deaf Sports Association and the Saskatchewan Cultural Society of the Deaf should be encouraged to assume/maintain a leadership role in making these opportunities available. (Note: Part of this recommendation is in concurrence with Recommendation 4.6 from the Task Force Report.)

**Recommendation 4:** That priority be given to the redeployment of the present R.J.D. Williams staff and that during the transition period discussions and negotiations between the Department of Education and respective parties take place.

Funding

**Recommendation 5:** That current funding levels for the education of deaf and hard of hearing children in the province be maintained and increased with a priority for reallocation being direct service delivery. As part of this, the funding currently provided to the R.J.D. Williams Provincial School for the Deaf should be retained and reallocated for deaf education.

**Recommendation 5.1:** That Saskatchewan Education revise its funding policy to more accurately reflect the costs associated with the provision of appropriate support services to local school divisions. Included as appropriate support services should be funding for interpreter services both for in-school and after-school hours activities. To accomplish this, the funding structure should be changed to top up the base grant with enhanced funding based on the program plans prepared for each child; this would build in an accountability process for funds received.

## Other Issues

**Recommendation 6:** That the regulations of The Education Act be amended to require that school boards provide an appropriate educational program for deaf children from age three to school entry age to ensure that deaf preschool children are guaranteed access to educational programs.

**Recommendation 7:** That the Department of Education explore ways of encouraging the employment of deaf personnel in the school system.

## Implementation Recommendations

To implement Recommendations 1 to 1.5, the committee recommends:

a) That the Department of Education, through the Principal of the R.J.D. Williams Provincial School and involving the Special Education Branch and the Psychoeducational Assessment Clinic (P.E.A.C.), continue to prepare exit program plans for students.

b) That communication channels be maintained with parents, students and staff of the R.J.D. Williams Provincial School and that Special Education Co-ordinators continue to play a role in this regard.

c) That the Department of Education Special Education Co-ordinator in Saskatoon be assigned a lead co-ordinating role to co-ordinate implementation plans over the next year (1991), working in conjunction with the School for the Deaf principal, P.E.A.C. staff and appropriate local school board personnel.

d) That the department's assigned co-ordinator (as identified in Recommendation 1) should work with the Principal of R.J.D. Williams Provincial School for the Deaf in arranging for foster homes and/or group homes for students now in alternate living arrangements and should facilitate the arrangements with parents and students at the R.J.D. Williams Provincial School for the Deaf.

To implement Recommendations 2 to 2.3, the committee recommends:

a) That an official from the Alberta School for the Deaf be invited to Saskatoon to meet with students and parents early in 1991.

b) That a visitation by students and parents to the Alberta School for the Deaf early in 1991 be facilitated.

c) That a process be undertaken by the Department of Education:
   - to ensure that information about this option and the congregated program option is provided in the same forum,
   - to identify those who favour the Alberta School for the Deaf option,
   - to make the necessary arrangements for a transition for those who favour this option.

To implement Recommendations 3 to 3.6, the committee recommends:

That the Department assign a staff person to develop an implementation plan for the Centre to be reviewed by the Advisory Committee in May, 1991. The plan should anticipate that the Centre would be initially established by September, 1991 and would be fully operational by January 1, 1992.

**Appendix B**

**DEAF EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**
**List of Committee Members**

Ruth Warick - Chairperson
**Advisory Committee on Deaf Education**

Dale Birley
**Member at large - parent representative**

Lynne Brewster
**Saskatchewan Preschool Auditory Rehabilitation Centre (SPARC)**

Winnifred Cory
**Hard of Hearing Association - Saskatoon**

Marian Egger
**Saskatchewan Co-ordinating Council on Deafness (SCCD)**

Helen Galbraith
**Association of Canadian Educators of the Hearing Impaired**

Bonnie Gadwa
**Member at large - parent representative**

Lucia Harold
**Saskatchewan Alexander Graham Bell Association**

Nella Hegeman
**Saskatchewan Teachers Federation (STF)**

Brian Henderson
**Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST)**

Carole Kraushaar
**Services for Hearing Impaired Persons (SHIP)**

Dr. David Illerbrun
**College of Education**
**Department for the Education of Exceptional Children**
**University of Saskatchewan**

Dr. Janet Johnston
**League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents (LEADS)**

Jean Lorenz
**Saskatchewan Deaf Association (SDA)**

Doug Lovegrove
**Member at large - parent representative**

Betty McNab
**Member at large - consumer representative**

Doug Biehn
**Saskatchewan School for the Deaf Home and School Association**

Marie Thiesson
**Saskatchewan Alexander Graham Bell Association**

Allard Thomas
**Member at large - consumer representative**

Judy Tinline
**Formerly, Saskatchewan Educators of the Hearing Impaired**

Bryon Weinmaster
**Canadian Hard of Hearing Association, Regina Chapter (CHHA)**

**Secretariat to the Committee**

Ivan Yackel - Executive Director
**Field Support Services, Saskatchewan Education**

Zane Syroishka - Educational Consultant
**Communication Disorders, Saskatchewan Education**

Elaine McDonald, Teacher -
**R.J.D. Williams School for the Deaf, Saskatchewan Education**

Connie Betson - Secretariat Services
**Field Support Services, Saskatchewan Education**

**Appendix C**

## List of Presenters to the Advisory Committee

Barbara Sabiston and Elaine McDonald, representing the Instructional, Residential and Health Staff, R.J.D. Williams Provincial School for the Deaf

Stan Tanner and Lois Reigert, R.J.D. Williams Provincial School for the Deaf Home and School Association

Darlene Couillonneur, Jason Gargol and Cindy Janes, Students, R.J.D. Williams Provincial School for the Deaf

Marie Thiesson
Saskatoon Board of Education

Kathy Arthur-MacDonald
Regina Board of Education

Bill Lockert, Principal
R.J.D. Williams Provincial School for the Deaf
Co-author, The Lockert and Trofimenkoff Report

Lynne Brewster
Saskatchewan Preschool Auditory Rehabilitation Centre

Nella Hegeman
Northern Lights School Division

Dr. Clifton Carbin, Executive Director
Deaf Children's Society of British Columbia

Merv Houghton, Chairperson
Task Force on the Education of the Deaf

Peter Sicoli, President, Saskatchewan Deaf Association

Murray Valiaho, President, Saskatchewan Educators of the Hearing Impaired

Robert Hutchinson, President, Saskatchewan Cultural Society of the Deaf

Gord Ryall, Executive Director, Services for Hearing Impaired Persons, on Educational Interpreting

John Enchelmaier, Principal, Newstead Special School, and formerly Principal of Queensland School for the Deaf, Australia

Tami Holodniuk, Robert Lloucks and Jennifer Roth, Saskatoon Board of Education Students

**Appendix D**

**STUDENT ENROLMENTS FOR R.J.D. WILLIAMS PROVINCIAL SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF 1981 - 1990**

| | RESIDENCE | DAY | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1981 - 82 | 76 | 37 | 113 |
| 1982 - 83 | 76 | 33 | 109 |
| 1983 - 84 | 73 | 39 | 112 |
| 1984 - 85 | 58 | 47 | 105 |
| 1985 - 86 | 50 | 46 | 96 |
| 1986 - 87 | 52 | 27 | 79 |
| 1987 - 88 | 41 | 30 | 71 |
| 1988 - 89 | 39 | 22 | 61 |
| 1989 - 90 | 27 | 24 | 51 |

**Appendix E**

**R.J.D. WILLIAMS PROVINCIAL SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF**
**GRADE LEVELS**

| GRADE/AGE | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1 | | | | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | 2 |
| 2 | | 1 | 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 3 |
| 3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 | | | 3 | | | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | 4 |
| 5 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6 | | | | | 1 | | 2 | | | | | | | | | | 3 |
| 7 | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | | | |
| Pre-Voc. | | | | | | | | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | | |
| 8 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 5 |
| 9 | | | | | | | | | 1 | 2 | | | 2 | | | | 5 |
| 10 | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | | | | | 2 |
| 11 * | | | | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | | | 1 | 1 | | 4 |
| 12 * | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | 2 | | 2 | 5 |
| TOTAL | 1 | 1 | 5 | | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 34 |

*3 students are taking subjects in both XI and XII

Figures as of November 27, 1990

**APPENDIX F**

## Students Designated High Cost Hearing Impaired
## 1989 - 90 School Year

| REGION | MILD 25-40dB | MODERATE 40-55dB | MODERATELY-SEVERE 55-70dB | SEVERE 70-90dB | PROFOUND 90+dB | UNILATERAL | TOTAL* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 8 | 2 | 22 |
| 2 | | 3 | | 2 | 6 | | 11 |
| 3 | 12 | 19 | 9 | 18 | 32 | 5 | 95 |
| 4 | 10 | 10 | 12 | 13 | 28 | 2 | 75 |
| 5 | 5 | 3 | 6 | 4 | 7 | 3 | 28 |
| 6 | 7 | 9 | 4 | 1 | 1 | | 22 |
| 7 | 5 | | | 1 | 6 | | 12 |
| TOTAL | 40 | 49 | 33 | 43 | 88 | 12 | 265 |

* Exclusive of RJD Williams Students